

**FIRST**  
COMICS  
LIMITED  
SERIES  
NO. 1 of 3

# THE P.I.'S

JAN. \$1.25  
NO. 1  
\$1.60 CANADA

MICHAEL MAUSER and MS. TREE

plus! MIKE GRELL'S  
TRIBUTE TO  
MICKEY SPILLANE!



Stanton Berkey

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**THE P.I.'S**

# FOUR COLOR CRIME

## part one: THE ODD COUPLE

THERE ARE 3,000,000 STORIES IN THE WINDY CITY... WELL, ACTUALLY, A FEW MORE THAN 3,000,000, AND BETTER THAN 7,000,000 IN THE GREATER METROPOLITAN AREA, AND COUNTING INDIANA, IT'S MORE LIKE...

FOR THE SAKE OF ARGUMENT, LET'S JUST CALL IT 3,000,000 AND NOT GET TECHNICAL.

ANYWAY, THERE ARE 3,000,000 STORIES IN THE WINDY CITY, AND 300 PRIVATE DETECTIVES.

THESE ARE TWO OF THEM. AND THEIR STORIES ARE ABOUT TO CONVERGE—OR, RATHER, COLLIDE...

michael  
**MAUSER**  
private  
eye™  
created by  
**NICOLA CUTI &  
JOE STATON**

**Ms. TREE**™  
created by  
**MAX COLLINS &  
TERRY BEATTY**

**MAX COLLINS**  
writer

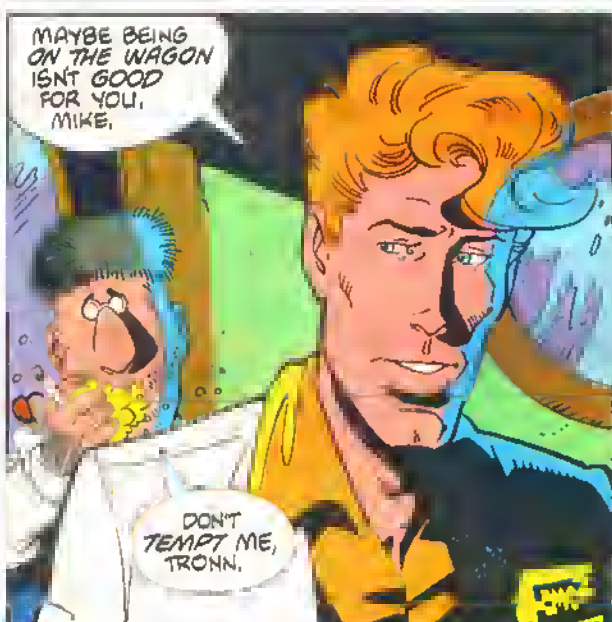
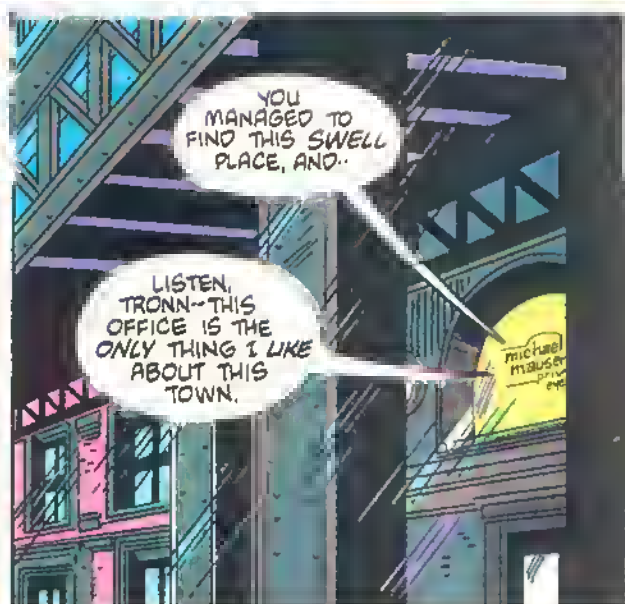
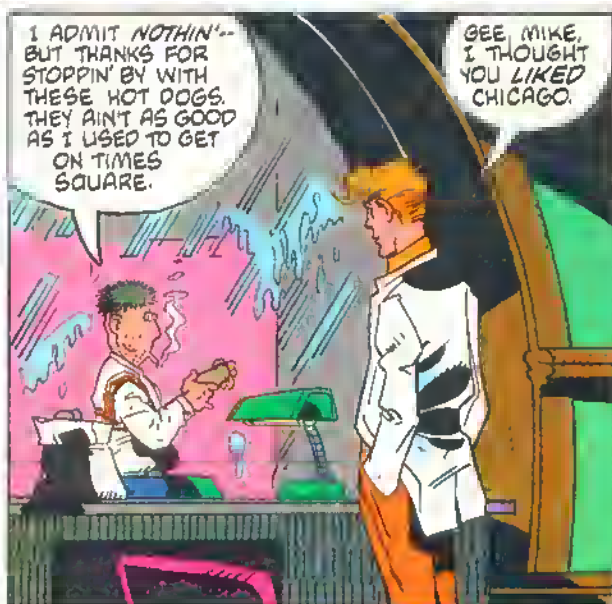
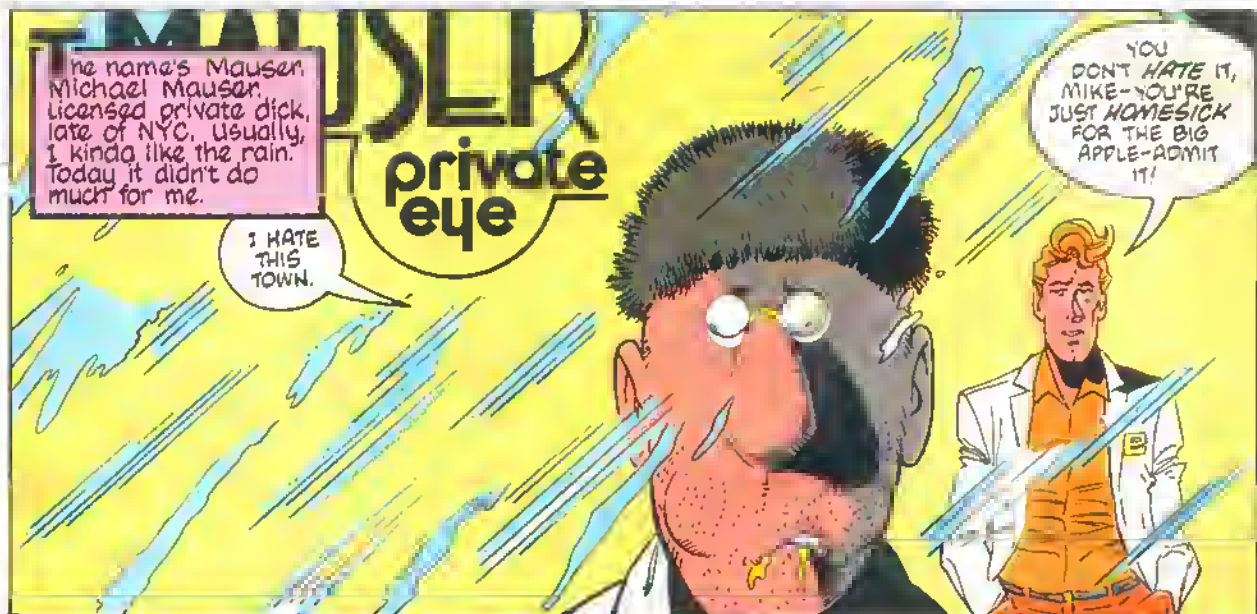
**JOE STATON**  
penciller  
**TERRY BEATTY**  
inker

**KEN BRUZENAK**  
letterer

**WENDY FIORE**  
colorist

**MIKE GOLD**  
editor







IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR MICHAEL MAUSER, YOU'LL FIND HIM INSIDE. SAY, DID YOU HAPPEN TO SEE...?

SOMETHING FURRY GOING DOWN THE STAIRS? I THINK I DID...BUT I HAVE BEEN OVERWROUGHT OF LATE..



I'M MAUSER. COME ON IN OUT OF THE RAIN, LADY-WANT A HOT DOG? HOPE YOU LIKE EXTRA MUSTARD...



THANK YOU, NO, MR. MAUSER, BUT YOU'RE VERY KIND, AND I NEED THE KINDNESS OF A STRANGER RIGHT NOW...



THAT'S WHAT I'M HERE FOR. KINDNESS, AT REASONABLE RATES.

I WANT YOU TO...I BELIEVE THE TERM IS "SH... MY HUSBAND, I... I SUSPECT HIM OF... FAITHLESSNESS



managed to seem shocked by this news flash-but I was more shocked by the wad of green she pulled out of her purse.

UH, YEAH, MAYBE WE SHOULD TALK RETAINER ABOUT NOW--

WOULD \$1000 DO?



**M**y name is *Michael Tree*. President of *Tree Investigations, Inc.*

I didn't realize it at the time, but the office I'd temporarily moved into was just a floor below one *Michael Mouser*, who is...marginally...in the same business as me.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A DETECTIVE TO FIGURE OUT WHAT A MESS THIS PLACE IS, MS. TREE.

DON'T LET IT GET YOU DOWN, EFFIE...IT'S JUST FOR A MONTH OR SO. TILL OUR NEW OFFICES IN THE TOWERTOWN TOWER BUILDING ARE READY.

OH, IT DOESN'T GET ME DOWN-EXCEPT MAYBE ON THE FLOOR WITH A SCRUB BRUSH. WHAT'LL IT BE, MS. TREE--BROOM OR MOP?

YOU'RE MY EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, EFFIE--MAKE AN EXECUTIVE DECISION!

I GUESS I'LL LET YOU HAVE THE BROOM-SINCE THE BAD GUYS ARE ALWAYS CALLING YOU A WITCH-GIVE OR TAKE A BROOM.

IS THAT A CLIENT COMING IN, MS. TREE? WE HAVEN'T ADVERTISED THIS ADDRESS--

MY GUN'S IN THE TOP DESK DRAWER, EFFIE...TOSS IT TO ME, IF HE MAKES A MOVE...



CAN I  
HELP YOU,  
SIR?



SORRY TO INTERRUPT,  
GIRLS--GO ON WITH  
YOUR CLEANING. I WAS  
UNDER THE IMPRESSION  
THERE WAS A PRIVATE  
EYE IN THIS BUILDING,  
AND I SAW THE SIGN  
ON THE DOOR,  
SO...



WE "GIRLS"  
ARE IN THE  
PRIVATE-EYE  
BUSINESS--  
BUT WE JUST  
MOVED INTO  
THIS TEMPORARY  
OFFICE AND ARE  
PUTTING IT IN  
SHAPE.

PERHAPS  
I SHOULD  
GO--



NOT AT  
ALL. WE'RE OPEN  
FOR BUSINESS--BESIDES,  
MS. TREE WOULD RATHER  
WORK ON A CASE THAN  
SWEEP THE FLOOR--  
RIGHT, MS. TREE?



NOW I  
RECOGNIZE  
YOU!

YOU'RE  
MS. TREE--  
YOU'RE THE  
WOMAN THAT  
TOOK ON THOSE  
MOB  
GUYS!



I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN AFFORD  
THE SERVICES OF A FAMOUS PRIVATE  
EYE LIKE YOU, MS. TREE--WOULD A \$1000  
RETAINER BE ENOUGH? IT'S JUST A  
LITTLE DOMESTIC MATTER--





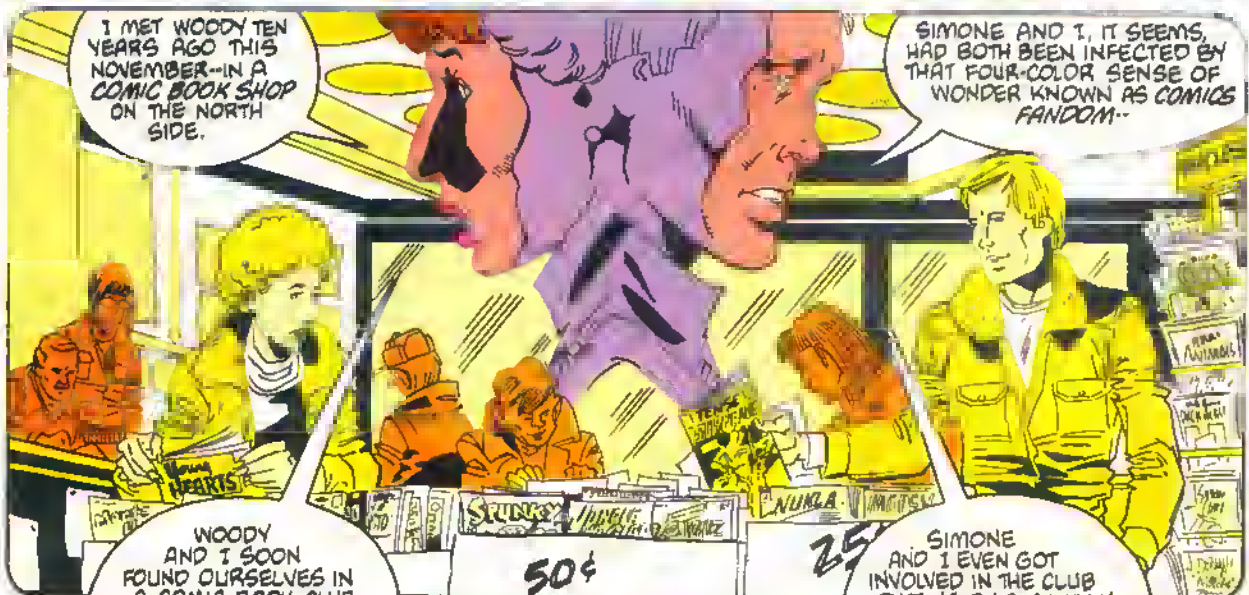
**H**er name was *Simone Kirby*, and where a quiet little middle-class gal like her got off tossing around thousand-buck retainers was a mystery I couldn't solve.

I LOVE MY HUSBAND VERY MUCH, MR. MAUSER.



**H**is name was *Woodrow Kirby*—why would a straight-arrow, middle-class guy like him come around handing out a thousand-dollar retainer to a private investigator?

I LOVE MY WIFE VERY MUCH, MS. TREE.



I MET WOODY TEN YEARS AGO THIS NOVEMBER—IN A COMIC BOOK SHOP ON THE NORTH SIDE.

SIMONE AND I, IT SEEMS, HAD BOTH BEEN INFECTED BY THAT FOUR-COLOR SENSE OF WONDER KNOWN AS COMICS FANDOM—

WOODY AND I SOON FOUND OURSELVES IN A COMIC BOOK CLUB, PUTTING TOGETHER A COMICS NEWSLETTER, WITH A LITTLE PASTE AND A LOT OF ENTHUSIASM—

SIMONE AND I EVEN GOT INVOLVED IN THE CLUB PUTTING ON A MONTHLY COMICS CONVENTION AT A DOWNTOWN HOTEL. WE HAD A LOT IN COMMON—WE BOTH LOVED COMICS—AND, SOON, EACH OTHER.



"WOODY WAS SHY WHEN THE SUBJECT WAS ANYTHING BUT COMICS! SO ONE DAY I BROKE THE ICE..."

WOODY, I KNOW WE DON'T LIKE THE SAME COMICS—YOU LIKE YOUR CRIME AND HORROR BOOKS, AND ME—

WELL, ME—I'VE ALWAYS BEEN A ROMANTIC FOOL WHERE LOVE COMICS ARE CONCERNED SO I HOPE I'M NOT BEING A FOOL WHEN I SAY—I THINK I'M FALLING IN LOVE WITH YOU.

I LOVE YOU, TOO, SIMONE. I LOVE YOU MORE THAN LIFE ITSELF—MORE THAN A COMPLETE RUN OF TALES FROM THE CRYPT.

"WHEN I HEARD WOODY SAY THAT, I KNEW THE NEXT THING I'D HEAR WOULD BE WEDDING BELLS."

"I NEVER DREAMED I'D FIND A GIRL LIKE SIMONE—SOMEONE WHO COULD ACCEPT ME AND MY COMIC BOOKS—"

SINCE WE WERE BOTH KIDS AT HEART, IT WAS NATURAL WOODY AND I WOULD WANT A FAMILY—BUT AFTER TEN YEARS OF TRYING, WE WERE STILL CHILDLESS—"

ADOPT?  
NOT ON YOUR LIFE?

OH, WOODY—WE COULD GIVE SOME POOR WONDERFUL CHILD A WONDERFUL HOME! WHY CAN'T YOU SEE THAT?



AFTER WEEKS OF ARGUING, WE FINALLY SETTLED INTO AN UNEASY TRUCE--BUT THEN--

YOU'RE GOING WHERE?

OUT TO THE MOVIES, WITH MY GIRL FRIEND SUZIE. WHERE DO YOU THINK?

"BUT LATER I CHECKED WITH SUZIE AND FOUND THAT SIMONE HAD NOT BEEN WITH HER..."

CAN YOU FOLLOW MY HUSBAND FOR ME, MR. MAUSER, AND FIND OUT WHERE HE'S REALLY GOING?

"MR. MAUSER, MY HUSBAND HAS BEEN BEHAVING SUSPICIOUSLY--LAST WEEK HE WENT OUT FOR A NIGHT OF BOWLING WITH THE BOYS--BUT I DISCOVERED HE WAS LYING!"

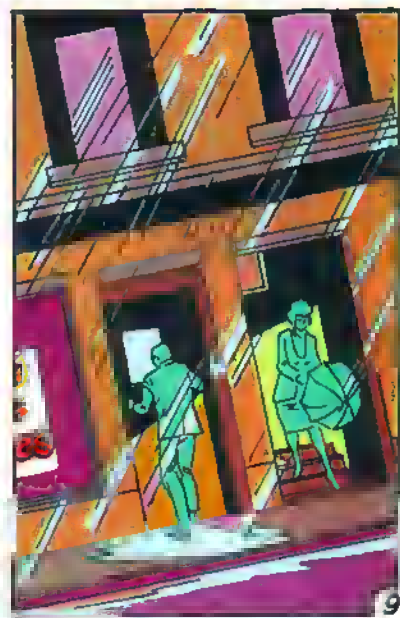
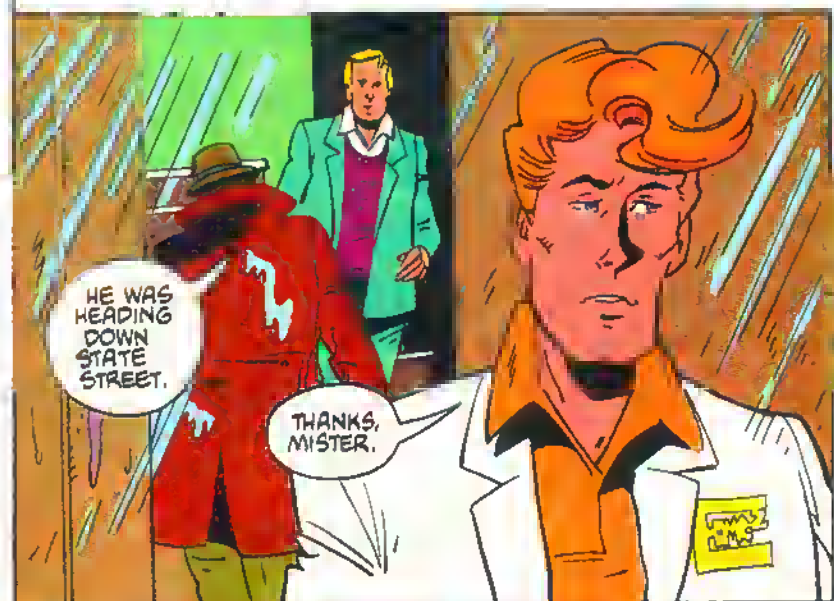
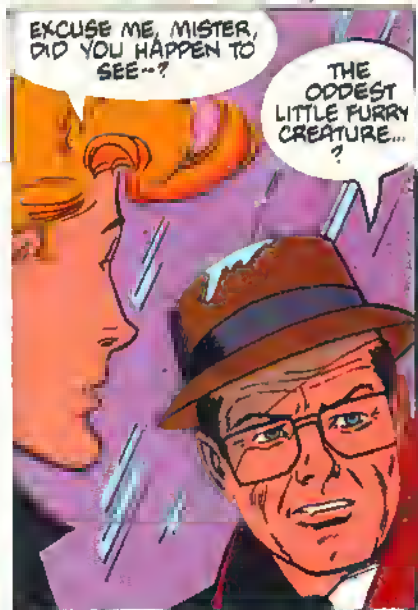
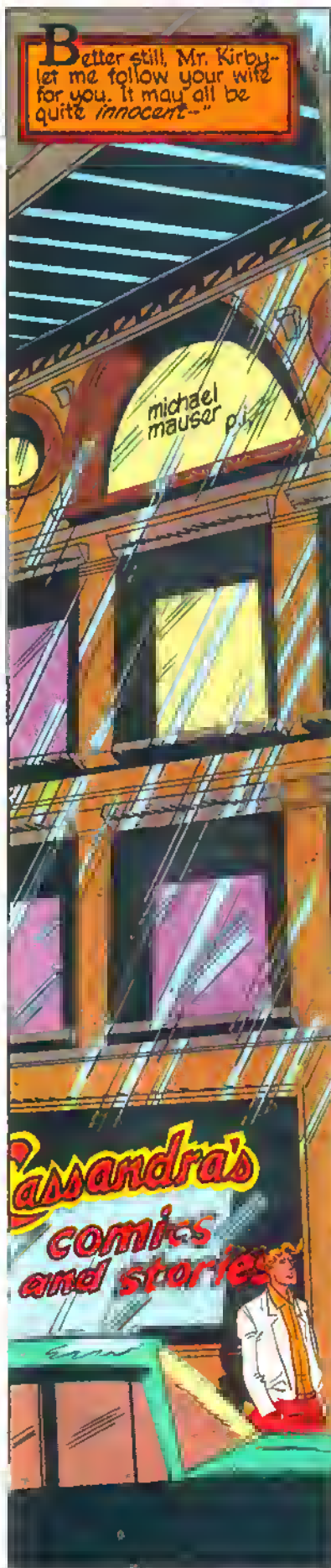
"I TRIED CONFRONTING SIMONE ABOUT IT, BUT SHE JUST MADE EXCUSES--"

I HEADED FOR THE BOWLING ALLEY, BUT JUST WASN'T IN THE MOOD--STOPPED AT A BAR FOR A DRINK, TO THINK! WHERE WERE YOU?

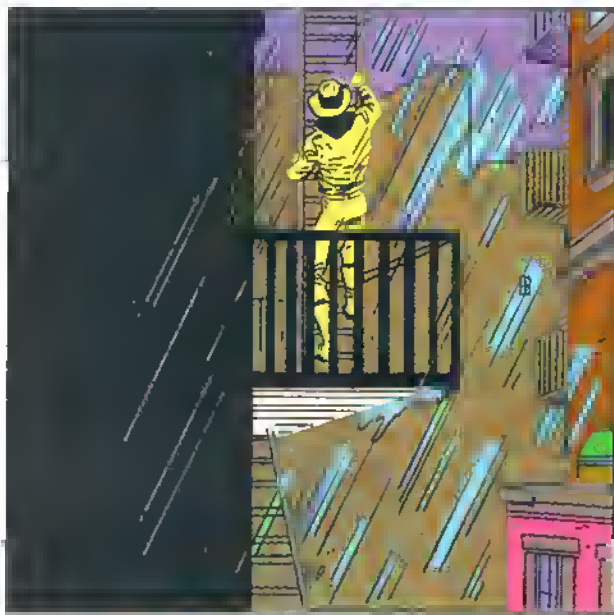
OH, I DECIDED TO GO TO THE SHOW WITHOUT SUZIE--WANTED SOME TIME ALONE--

I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT FOLLOWING SIMONE THE NEXT TIME SHE GOES OUT--BUT I'M AFRAID IF I FOUND HER WITH ANOTHER MAN, I'D MURDER HIM WITH MY BARE HANDS!

BETTER WEAR GLOVES--









**S**o I had a new case--  
checkin' up on some poor  
dame's hubby--I hoped it  
wouldn't turn into a messy  
divorce action. You might  
not know it from lookin' at me,  
but I make things *tidy*--



**O**f course, if life was as  
tidy as in the storybooks, I'd  
be outta *business*--



**R**ead life is full of loose  
ends and little *surprises*...  
like the guy with the gun who  
was perched on the stairs.



**H**e got  
out of my  
way, when  
I asked him  
to--

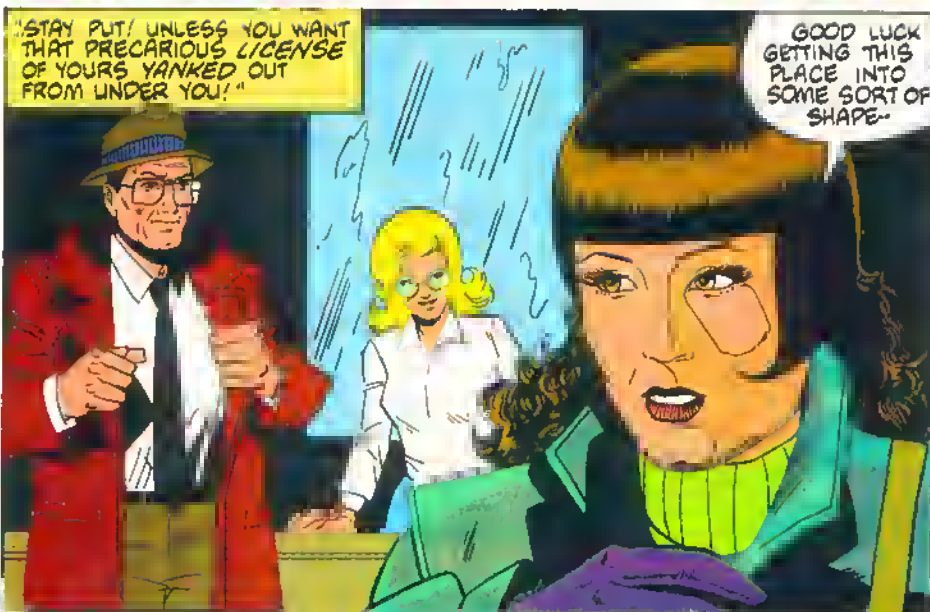
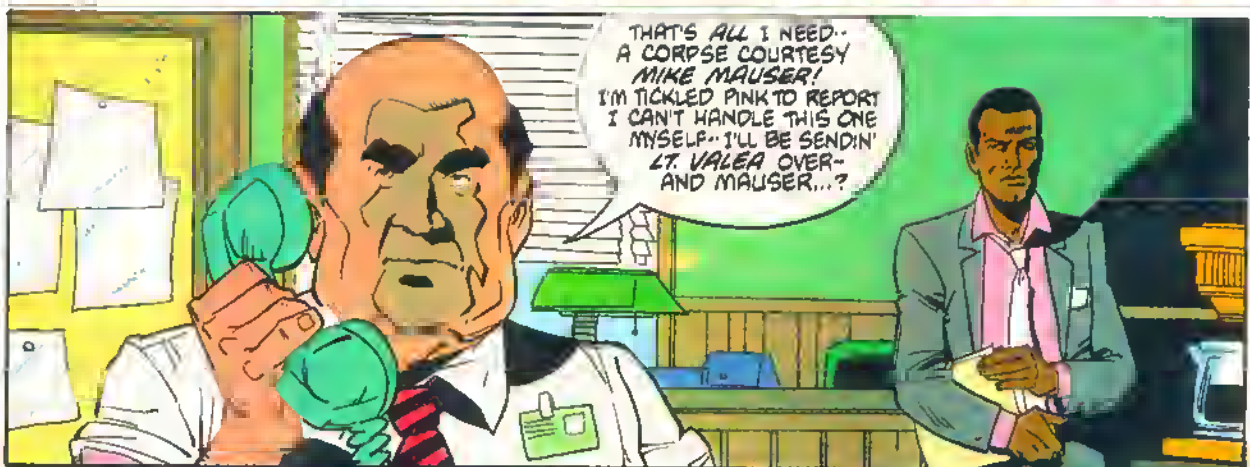
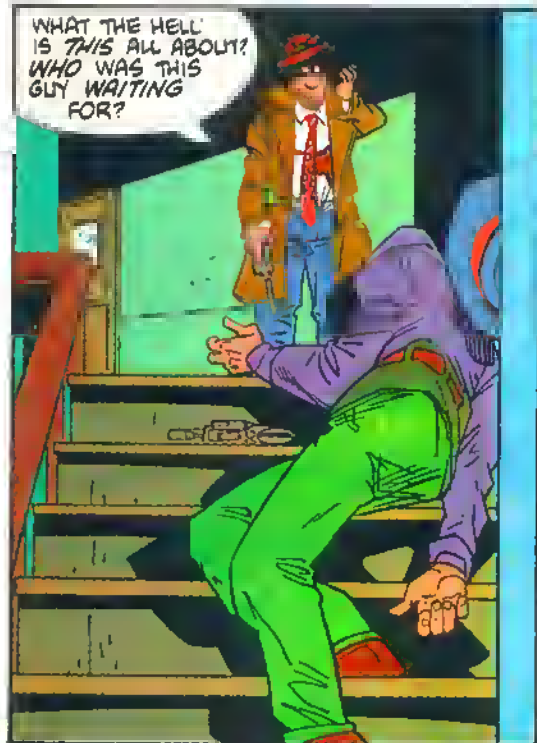


WHAT  
THE HELL  
WAS  
THAT?

JUST  
THE EL  
RUMBLING BY,  
MS. TREE.

THOUGHT  
I HEARD  
A CAR  
BACKFIRE--





**N**ormally, the legwork on a domestic case like this was something I'd turn over to one of my associates: Roger Freemont or Don Green. But Don was laid up in the hospital, and Roger was busy putting our files back in order...

**A**nd, as Effie would be first to tell you, I was anxious to leave house-cleaning to her. Being boss does give one certain privileges.

IS THAT A COMIC BOOK SHOP?

IT SURE IS—RIGHT IN OUR OWN BACK YARD. MIGHT AS WELL START RIGHT HERE—

**Cassandra**  
comics  
and more

HEY—AIN'T THIS THE BUILDING WHERE THAT LADY R.I. PAL OF YOURS IS SETTING UP, LIEUTENANT?

PRETTY COINCIDENTAL, A DEAD BODY TURNIN' UP ON THE PREMISES AND ALL—

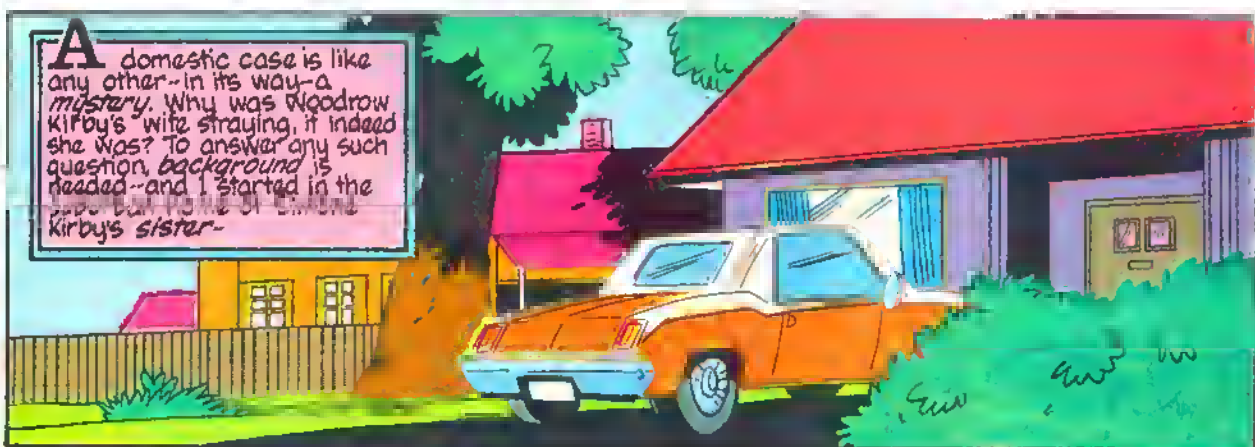
THE ARTICLES IN THAT PRICE GUIDE SHOULD GIVE YOU PLENTY OF BACKGROUND ON THE COMICS HOBBY, LADY—

THANKS.

OVERPRICE  
STREETGUIDE

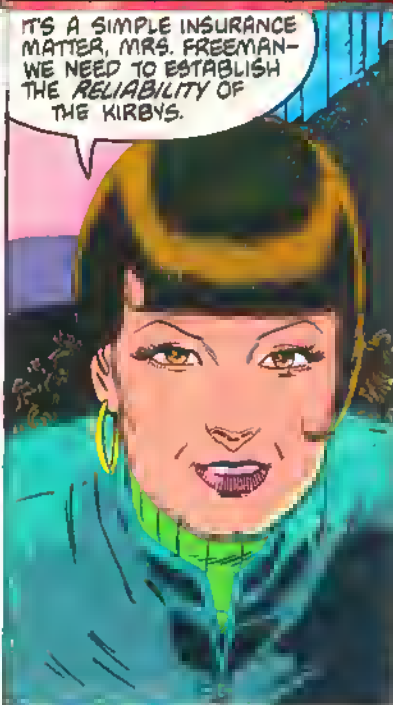


**A** domestic case is like any other—in its way—a *mystery*. Why was Woodrow Kirby's wife straying, if indeed she was? To answer any such question, *background* is needed—and I started in the Kirby's sister—



**C**onsidering the *delicacy* of the situation, however, I had to begin with a standard investigative technique: *lying*.

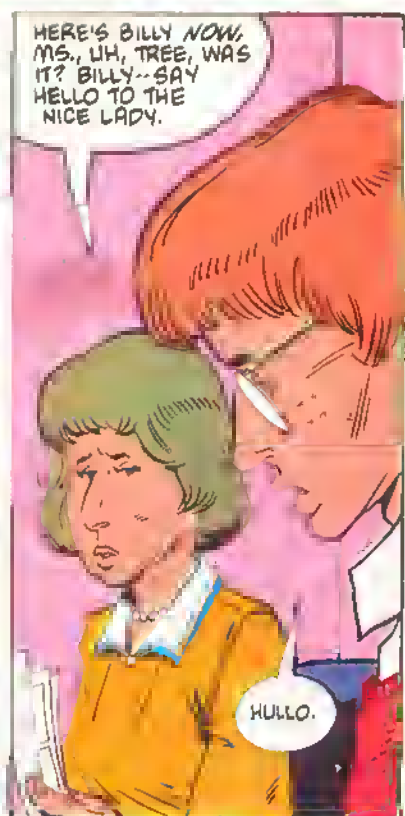
IT'S A SIMPLE INSURANCE MATTER, MRS. FREEMAN—WE NEED TO ESTABLISH THE *RELIABILITY* OF THE KIRBYS.



WHY, SIMONE AND WOODY ARE *WONDERFUL* PEOPLE—THEY'RE LIKE *SECOND PARENTS* TO OUR LITTLE BILLY—GETTING HIM INTERESTED IN COMICS—ENCOURAGING HIS ARTISTIC TALENTS

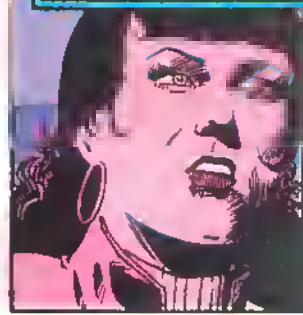


HERE'S BILLY NOW, MS., UH, TREE, WAS IT? BILLY—SAY HELLO TO THE NICE LADY.

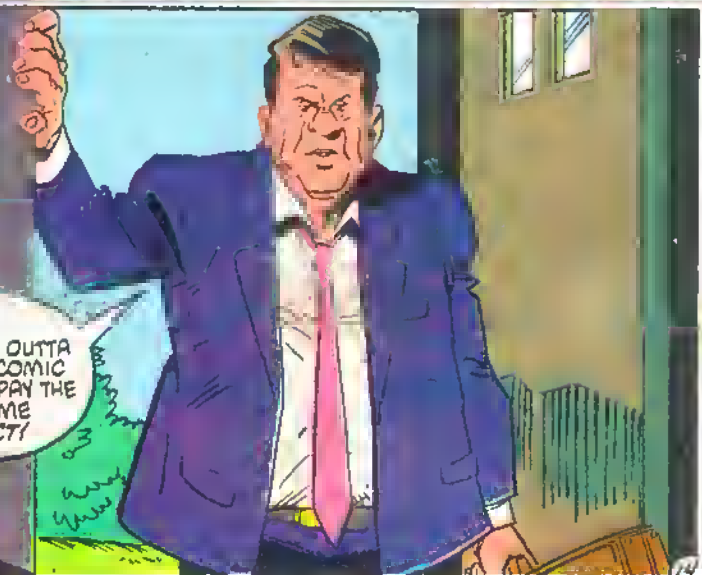


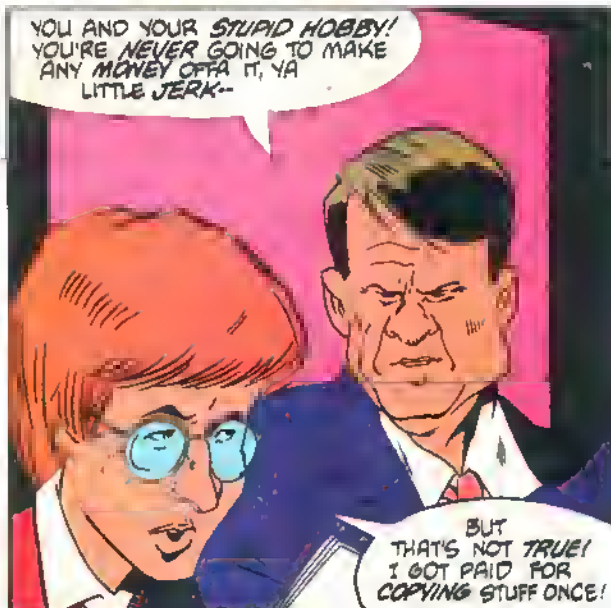
HULLO.

**T**he kid seemed less rude than merely *introverted*, in his own little four-color world—but suddenly, somebody came in the front door, with a *less understanding* attitude than mine—

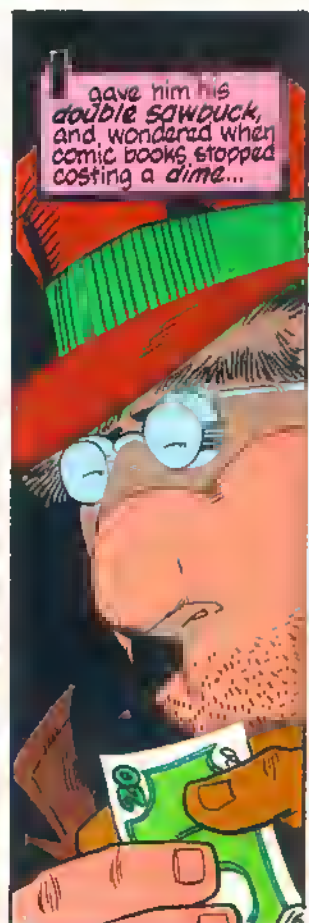
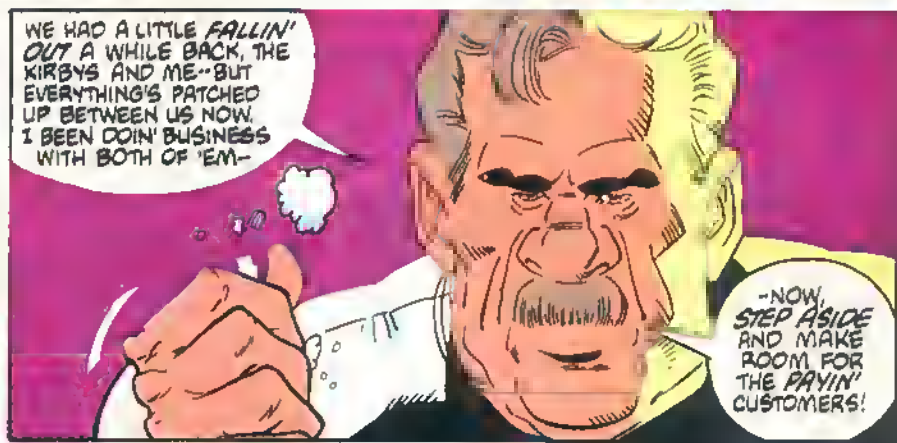


GET YOUR NOSE OUTTA THAT DAMN COMIC BOOK AND PAY THE LADY SOME *RESPECT!*

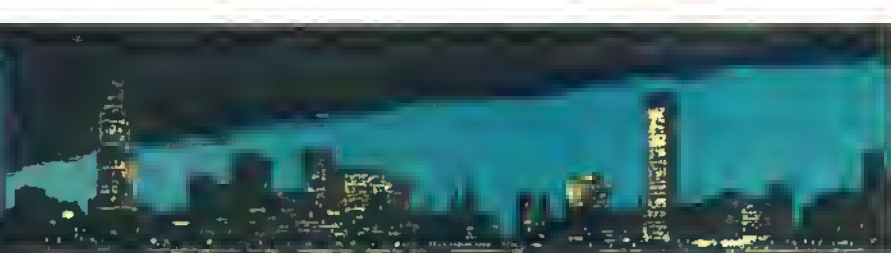








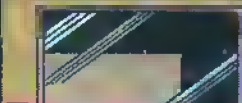
It seemed that *Kosmo Kosmic*--which was what the shopowner called himself--had been mixed up in some fast-buck schemes that'd led the Kirbys to take their comic book club elsewhere...



So *Kosmic Comics* was no longer affiliated with the comics club, and wasn't a part of the monthly convention, either. Which cost *Kosmo* some good will and some bucks.

☆ *kosmic comics* ☆

comics posters games *Kosmic*

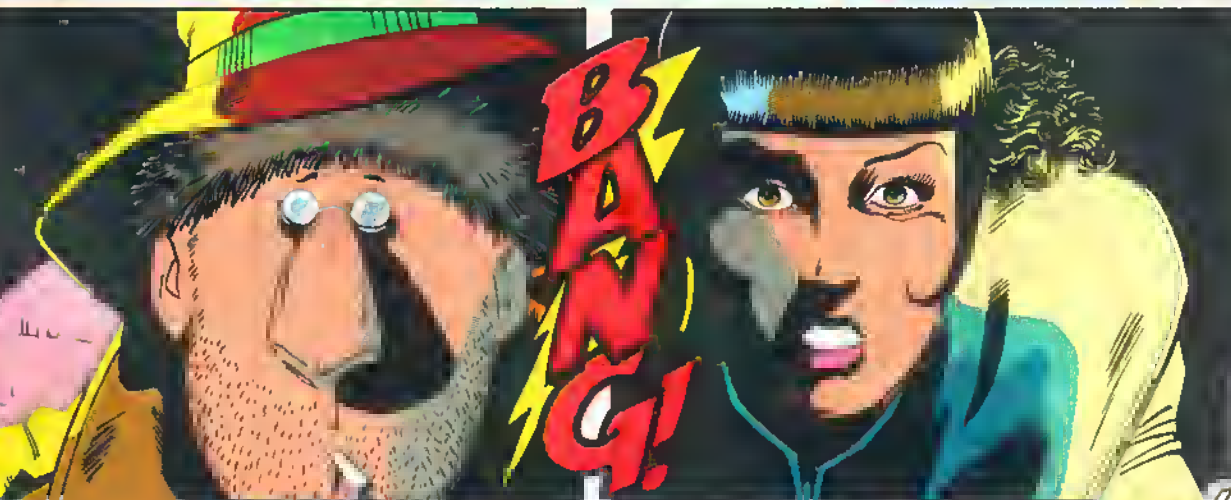


*Kosmo* was said to be mixed up in the sale of forged comic art to unsuspecting fans.

And now, here I was, hours later, back at *Kosmic Comics*, having followed Woodrow Kirby here--

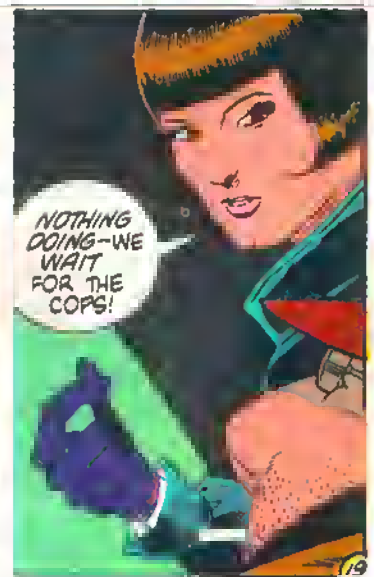
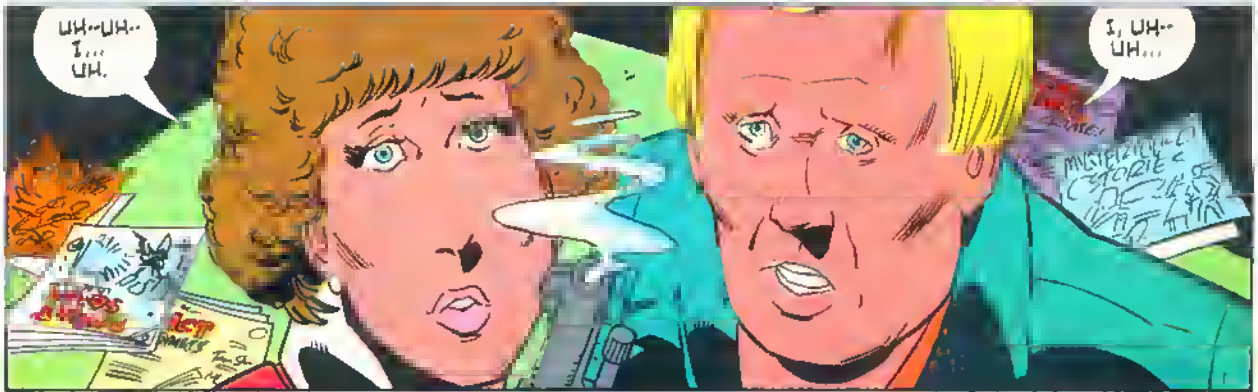


I followed Simone Kirby to this place, called *Kosmic Comics*, not fifteen minutes ago; and now, her husband, my client, enters-- what was going on here?

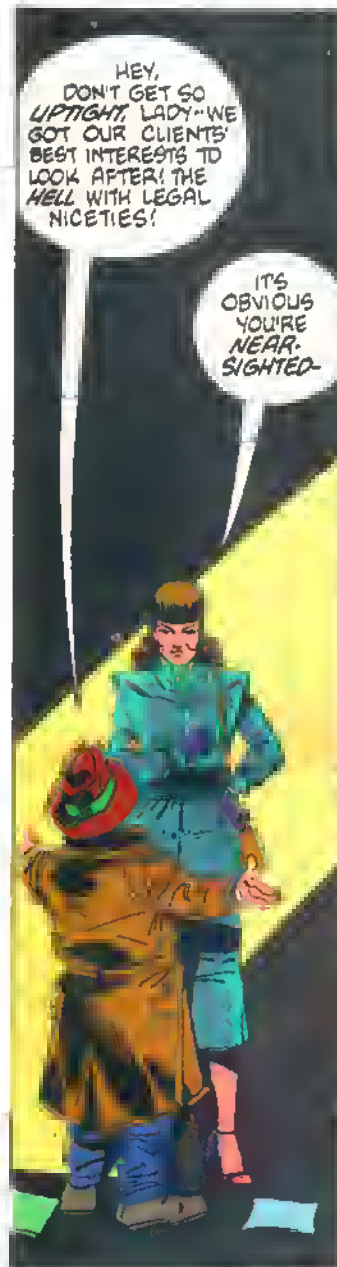












HEY, DON'T GET SO UPTIGHT, LADY--WE GOT OUR CLIENTS' BEST INTERESTS TO LOOK AFTER! THE HELL WITH LEGAL NICETIES!

IT'S OBVIOUS YOU'RE NEAR-SIGHTED--

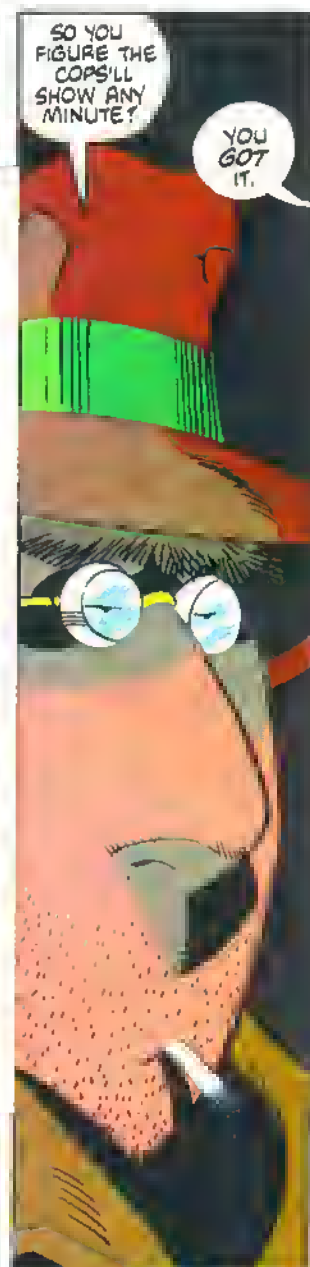


--I JUST DIDN'T FIGURE YOU FOR SHORT-SIGHTED, AS WELL--

TAKE IT EASY ON THAT "SHORT" STUFF--

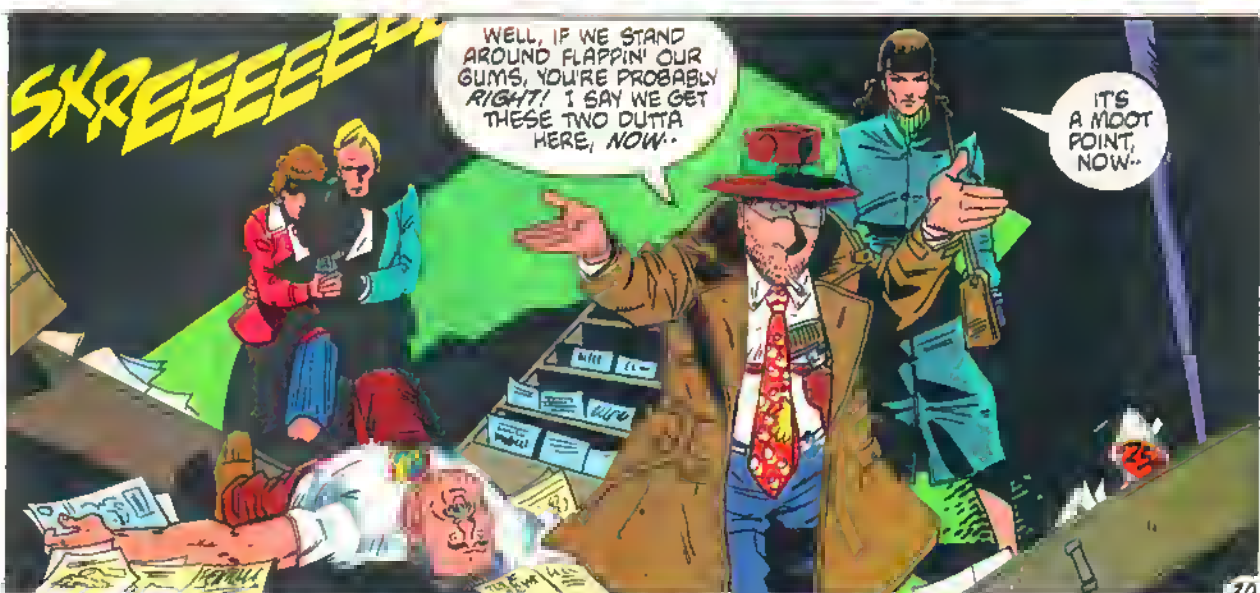


IF YOU THINK I MIND BENDING THE RULES, YOU HEARD THE WRONG STORIES ABOUT ME. BUT IF WE HEARD THOSE GUNSHOTS, YOU CAN BET SOMEBODY ELSE DID, TOO--



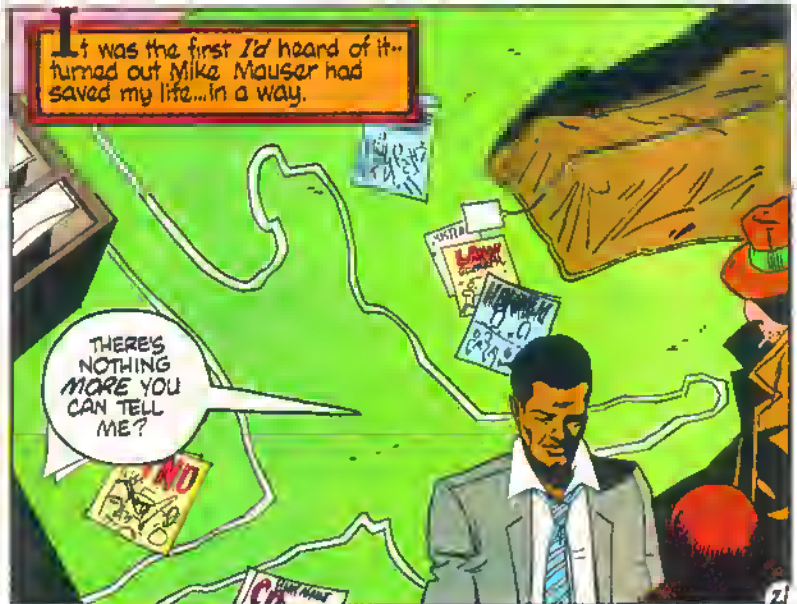
SO YOU FIGURE THE COPS'LL SHOW ANY MINUTE?

YOU GOT IT.



WELL, IF WE STAND AROUND FLAPPIN' OUR GUMS, YOU'RE PROBABLY RIGHT! I SAY WE GET THESE TWO DUTTA HERE, NOW--

IT'S A MOOT POINT, NOW--





Sorry, Rafe-I can't tell you anymore than that Mauser and I have been investigating a *non-criminal* matter for the Kirbys."



WE CAN'T TELL YOU ANY MORE, IT'D BE A VIOLATION OF OUR CLIENTS' CONFIDENCE.

YEAH.. WE GOTTA CONFER WITH THEIR LAWYER, FIRST.



YEAH, YOU DO THAT, NOW, WHY DON'T THE BOTH OF YOU JUST GO, AND LEAVE THIS CRIME SCENE TO THE EXPERTS.



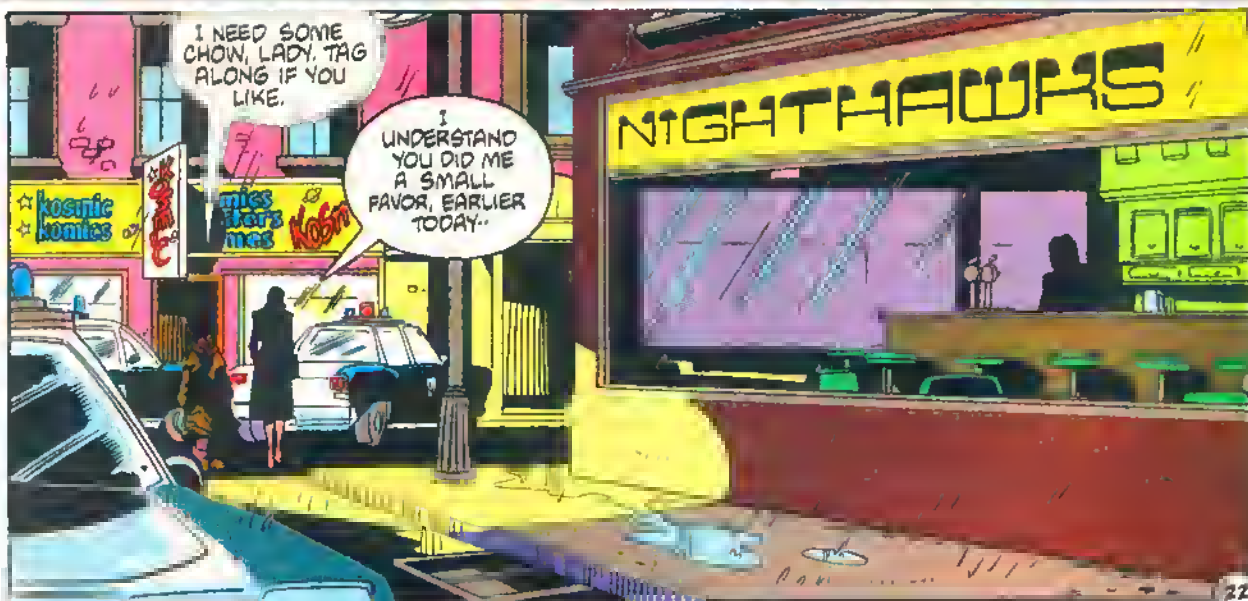
WHY, CERTAINLY, LT. VALER, AFTER ALL, I KNOW SO LITTLE ABOUT MURDER--

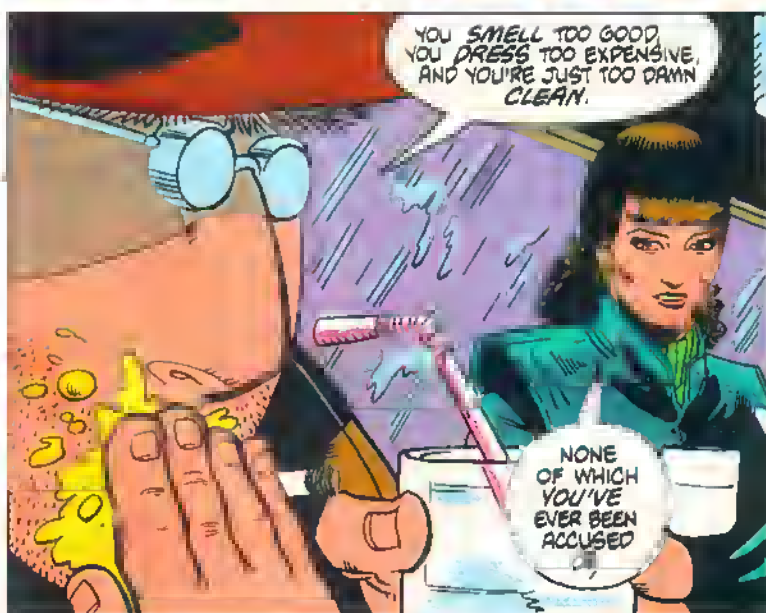
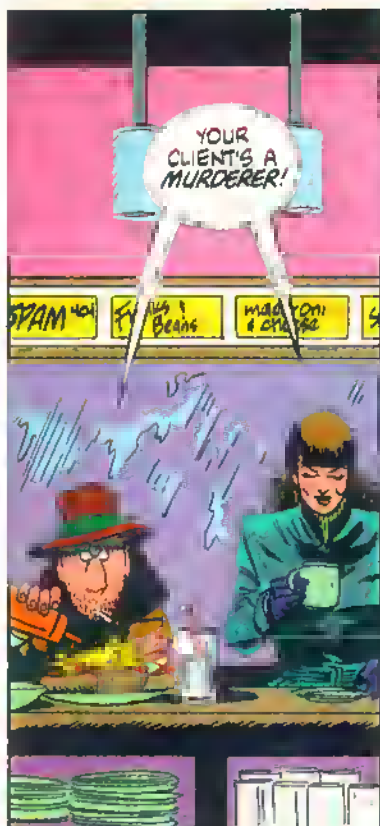
MAUSER, WAIT UP.



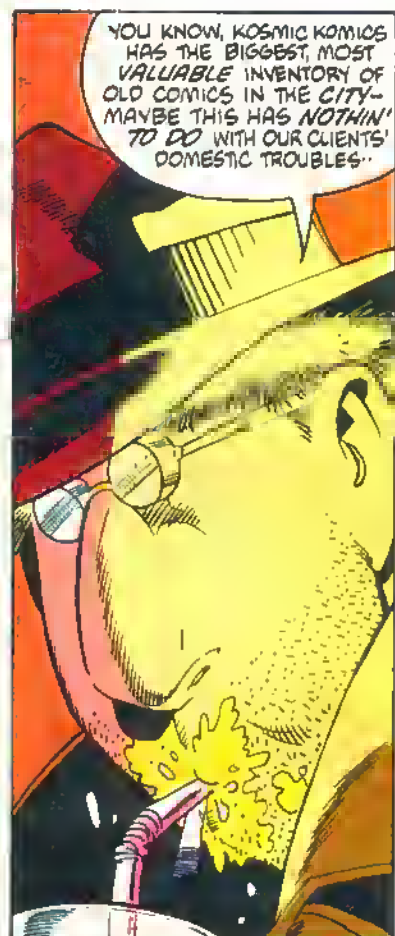
I NEED SOME CHOW, LADY. TAG ALONG IF YOU LIKE.

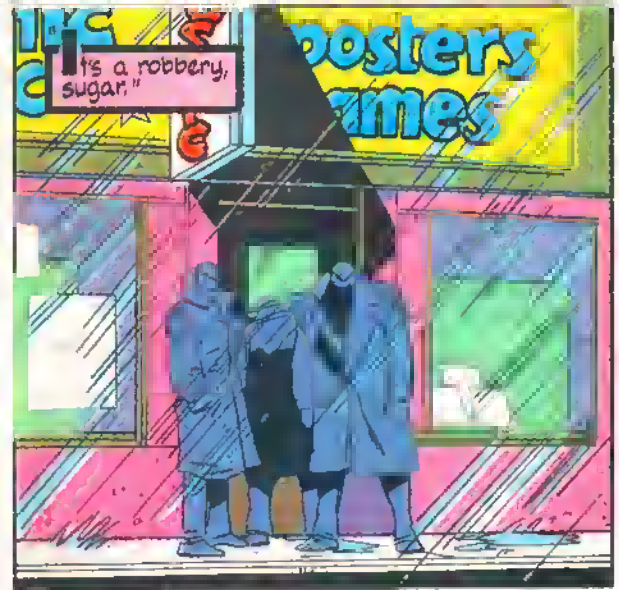
I UNDERSTAND YOU DID ME A SMALL FAVOR, EARLIER TODAY..
















I GUESS  
SOMETIMES  
FUNNY BOOKS  
AIN'T NO  
LAUGHIN'  
MATTER, HUH,  
MS. TREE?

MAUSER,  
I'M NOT EVEN  
SMILING--

**NEXT--PART TWO:**

**ALL IN COLOR  
FOR A CRIME**

# THE DEEP

Years ago, two young hoods flipped a coin for control of their territory. The loser left town — word was he'd become a powerful hood elsewhere. . .

Now, years later, the "winner" was dead — murdered — and on the street the word was out: the Deep was back!

Two rival gangs — as well as beautiful Hellen Tate — assume a power play is in the works; but Deep is not as interested in taking over for his dead childhood chum as in finding a murderer. . .

**The Deep** (1960) is the metaphorical tale of a tough guy's comeback, as it was murder-master Spillane's first novel in almost ten years. Both the Mick and the Deep lived up to their legends.

Based upon material from **One Lonely Knight: Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer**, by Max Allan Collins and James L. Traylor, published by Popular Press.

